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Measures to eliminate international terrorism

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Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 28 January 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I wish to draw your attention to the following information.

On 25 January 2015, Damascus awoke to the sound of indiscriminate missile fire directed at peaceful neighbourhoods and innocent women, children and old people. On that day, armed terrorist groups aimed over forty 107 mm calibre missiles, mortar shells and Katyusha rockets at numerous peaceful residential neighbourhoods in the capital. The targets included homes, hospitals, schools and the premises of embassies and international organizations. Six civilians were killed and over 53 were injured, including many children. There was also extensive damage to property.

A terrorist group, the so-called Army of Islam, claimed responsibility for those acts of terrorism. Its leader Zahran Allush made the following statement on social media networks: "The missile brigade is preparing to launch a missile attack on the capital Damascus ... In order to preserve the lives of Muslims living in the capital, all walking, commuting and travel by road is forbidden as of Sunday".

The terrorist acts took place at a time when local reconciliation initiatives have been gathering pace and preliminary consultations have begun in Moscow. With the help of the Syrian Arab Army, thousands of besieged civilians in the eastern Ghutah have been able to escape the clutches of the armed terrorist groups and come under the protection of the State, where they are safe and protected. This demonstrates that the groups, which are notorious for their extremist, *takfirist* Wahhabi ideology, are determined to undermine the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis in Syria. The success of such peaceful political initiatives would foil the schemes that they are putting into action at the behest of certain well-known forces in the region and beyond.

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The latest terrorist acts are part of an ongoing series of terrorist attacks that have been perpetrated over the last four years in most Syrian governorates by gangs of criminals and hirelings from within and beyond the region. In particular, Saudi Arabia and France have given material and logistical support and political and media cover to the terrorists, allowing them to think that they will escape punishment for their inhumane crimes against the Syrian people. These cowardly acts of terrorism targeted civilians as they went about their daily lives: children were going to school, and employees to their workplaces. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic stresses that such acts will not weaken the resolve of the Syrian people or its stalwart defence of its independence, sovereignty, freedom and dignity.

Such acts of terrorist savagery against innocent civilians make it incumbent on certain well-known States to stop referring to the groups as the "moderate opposition", and instead to call them by their true name: terrorist groups. That includes the so-called Army of Islam, whose shells have targeted peaceful residential areas of Damascus. Indeed, the most recent report of the Secretary-General on implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2014/48) states, in paragraph 10, that on 2 December 2014, the Nusrah Front, Ahrar al-Sham and the Army of Islam agreed to form a unified leadership council, a joint operations room and sharia court in Qalamun region.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic again calls on the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to condemn those terrorist acts and do what it takes to hold the perpetrators to account along with their backers in the region and beyond, particularly Saudi Arabia, Turkey, France and Qatar. Those countries boast openly of their support for the armed terrorist groups. They harbour and train operatives of those very groups that wreak destruction in Syria and the region, groups whose extremist ideology and terrorist acts are a threat to every country in the world. Syria also calls for the armed terrorist groups to be included on the Security Council counter-terrorism lists.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 107, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Haydar **Ali Ahmad**
Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.